

The Houston/Galveston Navigation Safety Advisory Committee

www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/advisory/hogansac/hogan.htm

Minutes of the February 23, 2006 Meeting

On the call of its sponsor, Rear Admiral Robert F. Duncan, USCG, Commander, Eight Coast Guard District, and after public notice in the Federal Register, the seventy-second meeting of the Houston/Galveston Navigation Safety Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, February 23, 2006. The meeting was held at the Doyle Convention Center, Texas City, Texas. The published agenda for the meeting is included as enclosure (1). A list of attendees is attached as enclosure (2). Documents made available to or prepared by the committee are available for public inspection and copying at the office of the Committee's Executive Secretary, CDR Jerry Torok, USCG, at U.S. Coast Guard Sector Houston/Galveston, 9640 Clinton Drive, Houston, TX 77029. Some of the documents are also available electronically through the Committee's website (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/advisory/hogansac/hogan.htm>). An audio recording of the meeting was made and is available for copying upon request. Copies of that recording must be requested in writing by March 01, 2007.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Patricia Clark at 1:15 p.m.

OPENING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CAPT Richard Kaser announced the implemented changes in Coast Guard (CG) structure and the standup of Sector Houston-Galveston and also announced his replacement as Sector Commanding Officer by CAPT Diehl. He shared his orders to report to the LANT Area staff and CAPT Balboni's orders to D7 in Miami, FL. He also ran through several other changes to CG positions throughout the District, such as RADM Joel Whitehead assuming command of the Eighth District, CAPT Branch assuming the duties of Chief of Staff, CAPT Sparks will assume command at Port Arthur, and CDR Brian Paul will assume command of MSU Galveston following CDR Ed Parsons promotion to CAPT and subsequent transfer. He mentioned that the sub-committees have been busy, but not many projects have culminated. CAPT Kaser offered praise for the Port Coordination Teams ongoing efforts, especially throughout several days of recent fog. He reported the attendance of 190 people at the recent Dredging Your Docks conference, and gave a quick intro to the State of the Waterways address to be presented by CDR Torok. The high Aid to Navigation (ATON) knockdown rate was reviewed and our methods of tracking down the offenders with the use of CG Investigators, ATON personnel, and AIS were briefly discussed.

REMARKS BY COMMITTEE SPONSOR'S REPRESENTATIVE

Doug Blakemore spoke on behalf of the committee's sponsor, ADM Duncan. He passed on the Admiral's appreciation and kudos' to the committee for their good work. He indicated that District's focus over the next few months would continue to be hurricane recovery. Specifically, how industry can efficiently get their critical employees back to their jobs so that we can reconstitute the port. He passed that CAPT Close and CAPT Branch would be convening a committee to discuss hurricane recovery operations. Mr. Blakemore asked the industry personnel to look into their post hurricane business plans, how to get people back for critical fill positions, along with what transportation and resources will be needed. Mr. Blakemore closed his comments by opening for questions.

OPENING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

The Committee Chairperson, Ms. Patricia Clark, addressed housekeeping issues, such as the difficult time we have had with records from meetings. She asked for anyone participating to please wait for the microphone, state your name before speaking and leave a copy of your remarks before departing. All committee participants announced their names and which sector of the maritime community they represented.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 18, 2005 MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded to approve the previous meeting's minutes. (Minutes, without enclosures, of the previous meeting are included as enclosure (3).)

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Hurricane Katrina awards were presented by CAPT Balboni and CAPT Kaser:

BMC James Dillon – Coast Guard Commendation Medal
BMCM Warren Woodell – Coast Guard Meritorious Service Medal.

OLD BUSINESS

Navigation Operations/Maritime Incident Review Work Group report:

Mr. David Foret presented in place of Ms. Tava Foret, the committee chair. The group completed its goal of visiting facilities and will continue to focus on the slack line issues. He discussed some positives from recent visits, following barge breakaways, resulting in changes to facility policies regarding doubled moorings alongside. The group is continuing to review vessel casualties. Mr. Foret noted that the state of the waterways address will contain data from their efforts. The workgroup will be soliciting sponsorship for Houston Ship Channel (HSC) brochure, which is targeted at the brown water fleet. Next possible project for the work group is reworking the 1995 HSC reference publication.

Dredging Subcommittee (will also include local port dredging updates):

Ms. Laura Porter: The subcommittee has been meeting monthly. The subcommittee has found several differences between published and reported depths. The subcommittee is working on a recommendation for frequency of terminal surveys and how best to make that information available to terminal operators. They have found some reluctance on the part of terminal operators to make this data available for fear of giving someone else a competitive edge. Next scheduled meeting is March 2, 2006 at 1000, and anyone interested is welcomed. The Army Corp of Engineers (ACoE) has put out for bids for dredging of the Texas City Federal Channel. The project is to begin before May 15. The inner channel will begin after May 15.

Wallace Hogan, Port of Galveston: The maintenance dredging continues; the dredge is currently at the Sulfur docks. The port continues to work with the ACoE on capacity issues and is also working with FEMA with respect to shore protection on Cell "C" on Pelican Island, which is subject to severe erosion in the area just east of Little Pelican Island. This area suffered a breach during Hurricane Allison and held up dredging in the Galveston Harbor Channel until it was repaired by the contractor doing the ferry work on Bolivar. It will remain a concern for the future dredging activity in Galveston Channel until proper shore protection is in place. Mr. Hogan expressed the port's hope that the emergency funds given to the ACoE will be used to remove shoaling between 11 and 12, and to complete the dredging of the Galveston Channel back to the authorized 40 ft. The Port continues to work with the ACoE on the deepening project for Galveston Channel and is working on the Port Cooperation Project (PCA) to meet the cost share requirements. The Port of Galveston's biggest dredging issues are with levee maintenance and the funding required to raise the levees to accept additional capacity for upcoming projects.

James Jackson, Port of Houston Authority: Mr. Jackson gave the status of dredging projects in the Houston complex. The dredge T.W. LaQuay has completed the maintenance dredging of the ports berthing areas. Private terminals were also dredged, including Manchester and Westway Terminals. In the Houston Ship Channel, the PHA has partnered with the ACoE to maintenance dredge the berths at the Bulk Materials Handling Plant to regain the projected depth of 43ft.. Orion Construction will commence dredging the Bayport Cruise terminal in July 06 and continue through March 07, while building interior levies at both containment areas and laying submerged pipeline across the ship channel. 400,000 CY of dredge material will be deposited in Placement Area 14, 600,000 CY of dredge material will be deposited in Placement Area 15.

Frank Garcia, ACoE, Operations Division – Upcoming contracts include dredging in the HSC and adjoining channels, areas from Morgan's Point to Exxon, Barbour's Cut, and Greens Bayou. The project will be advertised in February, and anticipated to be awarded in May. In April, the Galveston Channel project will be advertised and is expected to be awarded in May. Estimated completion in 2-3 months and should take care of the shoaling between buoys 11&12.

Deepdraft Entry Facilitation Subcommittee report:

Ms. Beverly Clarke: The subcommittee met on a monthly basis, with the exception of Dec 2005. Ms. Clarke reported that our area has maintained a static number of boarding's throughout the period. She spoke about two oil refiners in our area that are seeking Custom-Trade Partnership against Terrorism (C-TPAT) certification, through the Customs and Border patrol, where they inspect security procedures throughout the supply chain. This certification is part of the "fast track" proposal that is being assembled for submission to the Coast Guard to expedite vessels approval time to come into the port. They are experiencing some difficulty in retrieving information from larger corporations in regard to security operations. CAPT Kaser spoke briefly following Ms. Clarke and reassured everyone that he has liberally distributed her contact information to industry partners so that they could combine their problems with Coast Guard policy and communicate them to Headquarters. CAPT Kaser announced some headquarters assignment changes, such as ADM Bone Chief of Maritime Security will be assuming the duties Chief of Prevention. ADM Bone will be here March 1st at National Petroleum Refineries Conference. CAPT Kaser passed that the Chief of Prevention Compliance will be RADM Brian Sollerno. CAPT Kaser once again encouraged participants to continue to pursue these questions regarding CG policy issues. Beverly Clarke requested that these issues be added to the agenda for the next WGMA meeting, reiterating that data collection is paramount to presenting the issues.

This issue will be added to the WGMA agenda.

Technology Subcommittee report:

Captain Tom Pace – Did not present

AtoN Knockdown Working Group and pending AtoN projects:

CDR Jerry Torok: Aids to Navigation Knockdowns continue to constitute a major problem in and around the Houston-Galveston Port Complex. Aids to navigation equipment costs are on the rise and have resulted in nearly double last years costs. In CY2005 the costs of aids to navigation knockdowns was 1.6 million dollars. There were 216 knockdowns with only 17% being reported by the unit causing the knockdown. The 17% self reporting rate is the lowest in years.

In order to counter this trend the Coast Guard has undertaken a sensor package purchase and a change in monitoring techniques.

The Coast Guard expects delivery of the aids to navigation sensor packages this month and expects to have all the equipment installed and operational in approximately 30 days. The antenna packages for the equipment will be delivered in the next 10 days and the Coast Guard is to observe bench testing for acceptance of the equipment by March 1st. Once the equipment is accepted we will deploy it on the highest statistically knocked down aids.

Secondly, the VTS has developed an independent methodology using our installed equipment to identify non-self reported knockdown offenders. A significant number of

vessels that transit the Houston Galveston Port Complex are required to have AIS equipment as established by the Code of Federal Regulations. The VTS monitors the AIS signals during transits of the Houston-Galveston Area. Additionally, the VTS has RADAR and camera sites located throughout the port area.

AIS tracking, when combined with radar and visual surveillance, track and radar playback capability, and knockdown sensors mounted on selected aids to navigation in the Houston/Galveston Area give the Coast Guard the ability both to see and to record vessels causing knockdowns.

When a vessel collides with a buoy or other aid it is required to report the accident to the Coast Guard. Since our self-reporting rates have reached nearly record lows, when a non-self reported AtoN knockdown occurs, VTS will review all recorded transits to determine who could be the probable offender. This information will be turned over to Coast Guard investigators to open a case and if a mariner is found guilty of the offense it is our intention to pursue suspension and revocation against the mariner's license. There also exists the potential for a significant fine of up to \$27,500 per offense and the cost to replace the aid to navigation and appropriate tender time will be billed to the vessels company.

This is not the way the USCG prefers to interact with mariners. The USCG is providing fair warning of our capability through venues like the HOGANSAC and an article that will be published in GICA's newsletter. Additionally, Waterways Management & VTS personnel will pass the information along at all user group meetings whenever they can.

This process has begun and it is expect that there may be a few surprised mariners as investigations are processed. Everyone is requested to report aid to navigation knockdowns.

A question was asked regarding the status of a VTS camera on the Texas City Dike. March 31st 2006, was given as the projected date of completion.

Liquefied Natural Gas Work Group:

Captain Timothy Leitzell – Did not present.

Area Maritime Security Committee Liaison's report:

Mr. Raymond Butler attended the Area Maritime Security Council meeting on Jan 26th, 2006 and planned to attend the next meeting in March. He reminded everyone that April 26th & 27th would be the area wide Prep Drill. This will be the first drill to exceed 24hrs, and was designed to include a shift change. Additionally, CAPT Kaser was uncertain when round six of port security grants would start, but that it was expected soon. CAPT Kaser also commented that we are competing well in Urban Area Security Initiative. He mentioned briefly that we have several proposals going up to the State of Texas from the Greater Houston partnerships with the number one item as a 1.4 million dollar grant for maritime firefighting taskforce grant for this area. He stated that Houston-Galveston was

in perfect position to vie for some of these regionally offered grants. A Port Security Strategic Council has been assembled to look at applying for port security grants.

Restricted Visibility Work Group:

Captain Carlos Lozano spoke briefly in reference to new navigational software that the group has done research on and will be presented during the meeting. The Group met December 2005 and discussed the proposed expansion of vessel requirements for carriage of the Automatic Identification System. Ideas discussed included any vessel carrying 50 or more passengers and all commercial ships (including fishing vessels) of 65 feet or greater. It is estimated that approximately 17400 foreign and domestic vessels will be affected. This step would be a significant contribution to the work group's goals. The group also discussed the development of a protocol more inline with the legal and technical aspect associated with the navigation during reduced visibility periods. A copy of the first draft was circulated amongst group members and the feedback has been evaluated for the final draft. The draft protocol will be presented to the Pilot's Safety Committee for their review. The group has also been also looking for the latest equipment available in the market to improve the safety conditions during fog periods. Identifying a thermal-imaging binocular, capable of seeing through dense fog.

Harbor of Safe Refuge Working Group report:

Mr. John Salvesen indicated their report will be submitted and be posted on HOMEPOR website. The group drafted a mission statement, primary focus will be to deal with IMO resolution and vessels seeking safe haven. As was indicated, the working group met four times since the last HOGANSAC. Mr. Salvesen talked about an interesting article in the Marine Log that the Coast Guard will be taking the lead in the Nationwide Harbor of Safe Refuge program. He spoke about the group's accomplishments and their review of vessel limitations that are available, finding that we are limited to vessels in the 150 -160 ft. beam range. The group also looked at offshore lightering activities, with the assistance of Patricia Clark. Mr. Salvesen talked about pollution response and a preliminary report received from report from Dr. Buzz Martin, Texas General Land office, regarding locations for pushing offshore if needed in a pollution incident using a risk analysis model. Raymond Butler made a motion to vote for approval of the Harbor of Safe Refuge mission statement, unanimous approved, with no discussion.

Atkinson Island Safe Haven Mooring Project:

Mr. Raymond Butler officially closed the issue, as part of the safe haven initiative, stating that we won't be able to get the funding from Congress. It was stated that the issue will be put on the "nice to have but we can't pay for" list, and that he would like to redirect efforts to more critical areas.

On a separate note:

Mr. Butler expressed a desire to piggy back on David Foret's comments about the new port brochure. Houston Pilots have provided \$5000.00 for the project. The project organizers would like to print 1000 copies for distribution. A copy has been provided in the lobby, but it is a rough draft. The project needs \$5000.00 more dollars to finish publishing. Sponsorship will be on back cover. Distribution will be well outside of Houston area, all throughout the waterways community. There will be a letter published by e-mail to solicit funds.

National Harbor Safety Committee Conference update:

Mr. Richard Welch spoke reminded the committee of the last time HOGANSAC sponsored the National Harbor Safety Committee Conference four years ago, and talked about the upcoming conference. The 8th annual National Harbor Safety Committee Conference will be held April 26-28th at the Plaza State Hotel in Washington DC. Texas City proposed possibly sponsoring the NHSC in 2008. Alistair McNabb asked for intended attendees, four hands raised.

Capt Kaser remarked that this was a good time for this area to combine efforts and host the 08 conference, speaking with one voice for South East Texas.

NEW BUSINESS

2005 Vessel Traffic Service State of the Waterways Address:

CDR Jerry Torok gave the address, provided copies of the presentation and passed to the audience that the presentation will be available on the HOMEPORT website.

Dredging Seminar Report:

Ms. Laura Porter gave a brief regarding the outcome of the very well attended "Dredging Your Docks" dredge seminar, briefly reviewing the list of topics presented including discussion on the terms used and type of data collected in a hydrographic survey, and how to interpret data, the need for industry lobby for funding, use of Port of Houston dredge disposal areas, overview of what the ACoE does with respect to soundings and dredging, dredging techniques and costs, lessons learned from Hurricane Rita and the role of the PCT, demonstrations of the Corps' BEAMS System, Pilot's perspective on groundings, discussion of MAPS and how it could fill the need to disseminate the data, legal aspects of vessel groundings and insurance policies, terminal perspective on the "How To" on surveying and dredging. She recognized the Port of Houston Authority, the Houston Pilots, Chris Ransome & Associates, Inc, and the Orion Marine Group for partnering in the sponsorship of the seminar. Raymond Butler restated the importance of lobbying, especially when congress is working on a fourth supplemental for the ACoE.

Statement by Committee Member:

Beverly Clark remarked that the Port Coordination Team worked like clockwork, and wished to make a formal Thank you on behalf of the refinery community.

High Resolution Bathymetric Detail Software: OSI

Mr. Bryan Price from OSI Navigation Systems made a presentation regarding his company's software. He began with an overview of their business and then gave a comprehensive presentation on the benefits and uses of the High Resolution Bathymetric Detail Software and gave a list of other agencies, and corporations that area using the technology.

Contact information:
OSI Navigation Systems
Offshore Systems Ltd.
Toll Free (N America): 1 877 432 7467
Tel: 604 904 4628

Fax: 604 987 2555
Email- bprice@osl.com
#107 - 930 West 1st Street,
North Vancouver, BC,
Canada V7P 3N4

NEXT MEETING

James Jackson proposed having a section of the agenda for future meeting to include Action Items which are items to vote on. Tricia Clark agreed to insert it into the next meeting agenda.

Combined working groups meeting – 0900, Thursday June 8, 2006 at WGMA (tentative)

Full Committee meeting – 0900, Tuesday June 27, 2006 at the Houston Pilots Office.

CAPT Kaser reminded everyone that March 25th is Trash Bash Day and encouraged maximum participation.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 P.M.

CAPT RICHARD M. KASER
Executive Director

Certified: PATRICIA CLARK
Committee Chair

Enclosures: (1) Published Agenda
(2) List of Members and Public in Attendance
(3) Minutes of October 18, 2005 HOGANSAC Meeting
(4) 2005 State of the Waterway Address